

## **COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS, AMERICAS CANDIDATES' BILL OF RIGHTS**

The diversity of individuals who will progress through the CMS-A programming with the goal of becoming Master Sommeliers correlates directly to the quality and safety of our examination environments and our actions within the community as a whole. In order to include the broadest possible range of qualified candidates, we must ensure a safe and equitable environment for our candidates at every CMS-A event. In an effort to give clear direction to our candidates and members, the CMS-A has created the following Candidates' Bill of Rights. This is our commitment to all candidates who participate in any portion of our programming, events, or activities.

If a candidate ever feels subjected to treatment that is not fair and equitable, we ask that they immediately report the behavior to Lighthouse Anonymous Reporting, at [www.lighthouse-services.com/mastersommeliers](http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mastersommeliers), or to a Master Sommelier with whom the candidate feels comfortable communicating.

All reports of behavior that contravene the Code of Ethics of the CMS-A will be reviewed by the Ethics and Professional Responsibility Committee and may be referred to an impartial third-party investigator. The Ethics and Professional Responsibility Committee chair(s), in consultation with the chair and vice-chair of the board of directors, will determine at the point of referral whether the accusation is severe enough to warrant the immediate suspension of an individual from participation in CMS-A sponsored activities prior to a full investigation.

CMS-A will ensure that anyone reporting misconduct will be protected from any retribution or retaliation as outlined in the Code of Conduct.

All candidates have the right to:

- A testing environment free from misconduct or bias, including but not limited to harassment or coercive behavior by examiners or other candidates.
- An examination based on their skill set and knowledge, free from bias.
- Respectful conduct by examiners, educators, and fellow candidates or students while involved in CMS-A programming.
- Impartial and unbiased examiners, free from unfair or prejudicial influence from previous examinations or outside actions of the candidate.
- Request mentorship from a Master Sommelier without fear of any expectation of reciprocity or quid pro quo.

- Engagement in a mentor-mentee relationship without fear of any expectation of reciprocity or quid pro quo.
- Receive feedback and results from an examination in a constructive, timely, respectful, accurate, and nonprejudicial manner.
- Request the recusal, without fear of retribution, of individual Master Sommeliers from directly examining them if there is a belief that the interaction in question will adversely affect their ability to perform at an examination. This information will be collected at the time of application, will be kept confidential, and will be accessible only to the executive director, director of operations, associate director of operations, education director examination director and the cochairs of the Ethics and Professional Responsibility Committee.
- Contact an approved representative of the CMS-A for a detailed explanation of their exam results.
- Timely and clear communication from the CMS-A regarding examination locations, times, and other logistical details.
- Voice their questions and concerns about the content and administration of examinations.
- A detailed explanation of examination standards and what is expected for success at each level.
- Freely report, anonymously or not, behavior or actions that are in violation of the Code of Ethics without fear of retaliation or retribution. Reports can be made online to Lighthouse Anonymous Reporting, at [www.lighthouse-services.com/mastersommeliers](http://www.lighthouse-services.com/mastersommeliers), or to a Master Sommelier with whom the candidate feels comfortable communicating.